



**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
May 12, 2009**

Attendees –

Board Members Present: James Buckley, Brenda Dresner, Glenn Dresner, Jodie Douglass, Cindy Fairbanks, Robert Goehring, Ginny Grant, Jane Gray, Peg Turrentine, and Marilyn Almon.

Board Members Absent: Barbara Brannon, Nat Gruesen, Mary Beth McCaughey, and Susan Peacock.

AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:

CEA - Horticulture – Shari Koch

Quorum Present? Yes

Call to Order – Substituting for Nat, Glenn Dresner called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:51 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes – After a motion by Brenda Dresner and a second by Cindy Fairbanks, the amended minutes of the April 14, 2009, Board meeting were approved by all.

Officer and Committee Reports:

President – Nat Gruesen

- Nat was not present.

Vice President – Glenn Dresner

- Glenn congratulated FBCMG members on the outcome of the State Awards competition. A listing of awards won is included in the Awards section of the minutes.
- He also thanked those master gardeners who assisted in implementing the fire ant control program on the FBCMG grounds and thanked the five hosts who opened their gardens for the Spring Master Gardener Tour. More information about the garden tour is found in the Member Relations report which is attached to the minutes.

Secretary – Susan Peacock

- Susan was not present.

Treasurer – Peg Turrentine

- Peg commented that the Native Garden is over budget at this time.
- Glenn raised the question about negative expenses in the Community Relations portion of the financial report and it was explained that the negative expense is actually an income item.
- An Amegy Bank debit card has been activated and Robert will maintain possession of the card.
- Peg questioned to which account the thermal labeler should be charged and it was agreed that it would remain in Fund Raising. Although it will be used for plant labeling in the gardens, the main reason it was purchased was to be used for the sale of veggies and herbs.
- Peg will contact master gardeners whose names were suggested by other Board members to conduct the quarterly financial audit.

Past President – Mary Beth McCaughey

- Mary Beth was not present.

Awards – Jodie Douglass

- Jodie's report is attached to the minutes.
- Jodie announced that FBCMG entered seven categories and won awards in five categories at the 2009 TMGA Conference in Marshall, TX. The following awards for 2008 were received in the medium-large classification:
 - Individual Award – Cliff Bergman – 3 way tie for third place with Smith and Victoria Counties. Application submitted by Margo.
 - Publication Award – Second place for "Garden Insect Field Guide," created by the Entomology Group. Application submitted by members of the Entomology Group.
 - Association Award – Tie for second place with Victoria County. Application submitted by Margo and Jodie.
 - Graphic Award – First place for "Attracting Birds and Butterflies to Your Garden," created by Pam Tatge. Application submitted by Pam Tatge.
 - Newsletter Award – First place for The Grapevine. Application submitted by Marilyn Almon.

Communications – Robert Goehring

- Robert has compiled a list of the 100 questions most frequently asked on the website and will route it to Board members. In the past, master gardeners have provided the answers and Margo has verified the accuracy. Margo stated that she would like to see brochures evolve from some of the questions and eventually have a library of brochures relevant to Fort Bend County available for public access.
- The website is averaging 6,000 to 9,000 hits per month.

- Marilyn thanked Robert for his speedy response to requests concerning website updating and posting.

Community Relations – Brenda Dresner

- No report.

Fundraising – Barbara Brannon

- Barbara was not present.

Greenhouse – James Buckley and Glenn Dresner, co-chairs

- The greenhouse report is attached to the minutes.

Landscape –Cindy Fairbanks and Jane Gray, co-chairs

- Cindy and Jane's report is attached to the minutes.
- About 20 master gardeners attended the May 2nd workday, including two visitors who helped move sand.
- There were several visitors in the gardens and it was noted that master gardeners were not interacting with the visitors. An emphasis needs to be placed on taking the time to make the visitors feel welcomed and to answer their questions.
- Dave Kauffmann, from Golden Rule Gazebo, was a workday visitor, taking pictures of the Outdoor Classroom.
- When the landscaping around the Outdoor Classroom is completed in possibly two to three weeks, the dedication will be scheduled. Ultra soil from CJM was used in the beds.
- Glenn, Cliff, and Jim Cowan have finished the irrigation repairs in the Rose Garden and Outdoor Classroom beds. The Japanese Garden is still under renovation. Gardens will be scheduled for watering by the irrigation system one time per week.

Member Relations – Marilyn Almon

- Marilyn's report is attached to the minutes.

Youth Activities – Ginny Grant

- Ginny is working with 16 students at Deaf Smith Elementary every Tuesday. The school would like to have a greenhouse for the students and the community.
- Schiff Elementary received a grant for a habitat garden which will now become a vegetable garden.
- There is an upcoming teacher in-service for Plants in the Classroom. PIC may undergo a name change to better denote its function.
- The SE Texas Home School Association will hold a convention at Reliant in June and is interested in JMG activities.

Standing Committee Reports:

Governance Committee

- Marilyn routed the May 12, 2009, revision of the Operations Manual to all Board members and Robert posted it on the About Us page of the website prior to the May 12th Board meeting.

Extension Service Advisor Reports:

CEA – Horticulture – Shari Koch

- To compensate for chicken expenses previously paid by FBCMG, Fort Bend County will reimburse FBCMG for the first \$86 of Ag'tivity Barn expenses in the fall.
- Shari announced that AgriLife Extension is planning a bus tour of agricultural industries in Fort Bend County on June 30th. Elected officials and department heads in FBC, as well as school district officials and Extension officials, will be invited to participate. Officials will also tour the demonstration gardens. Dinner will be served at 6:30 at the Bud O'Shieles Community Center and FBCMG is being asked to donate decorations and desserts for the occasion. A master gardener representative will be asked to present a five minute talk describing FBCMG's role and contributions to the community. Ginny volunteered to coordinate decorations and Marilyn volunteered to coordinate desserts.
- Shari was excited about the awards received at the TMGA conference. She suggested recognizing FBCMG in a special way at the May monthly meeting.

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

- Margo announced that three FBCMG members have completed the Rainwater Harvesting Specialist Training: Anne Ondrusek, Dave Gerstenberger, and Catherine Pennington.
- A Vegetable Specialist Training, conducted by Joe Masabni and hosted by FBCMG, is being planned for July 24-25. Registration will be limited to 50 participants (two master gardeners per county) and other counties have expressed interest in attending. It will be necessary to provide two lunches and one dinner for the participants and instructors. Ben's Chuck Wagon has been contacted about providing the lunches and Margo would like to hold the dinner at the George Ranch at a cost of \$45 per person. Robert made a motion, seconded by Brenda, for \$3000 to be spent for dinner at the George Ranch. Discussion ensued and Marilyn asked what other expenses in addition to meals might possibly need to be paid by FBCMG. It was not known at the time how much other expense, not covered by the \$250 per person tuition, would have to be borne by FBCMG. A suggestion was made that a less expensive dinner (possibly Swinging Door) could be considered in light of FBCMG's unknown total expenditure for the training. Robert withdrew his motion and Margo agreed to provide a proposal with the total expense FBCMG would incur before asking the Board to approve the expenditure for dinner. Board members were enthusiastic about hosting the training in Fort Bend County.
- The master gardener digital camera is six years old and no longer works.

- Margo requested that a moisture meter be purchased because master gardeners are not always familiar with irrigation needs. Jane made a motion, seconded by Jodie and approved by all, to spend up to \$125 to purchase a moisture meter.
- Margo recommended increasing dues to \$20 per year in 2010 to facilitate the collection of YPS fees. The reason for the increase would be explained to the membership.

Other:

- Fall 2008 Class Graduation will be held on May 28th.
- EarthKind® Kids Kamp registration forms will be posted on the website.
- Glenn distributed “Suggestions for Fort Bend Master Gardeners to Prepare for Conversion to Surface Water” to all Board members. A copy is attached to the minutes.

Old Business:

Unfinished Business from Prior Year

- Tabled until June.

Date for Dinner for Heidi

- Tabled until June.

New Business:

Monthly Programs (May)

- Tabled until June.

JMG Educational Grant

- Tabled until June.

Term Limits

- Tabled until June.

Glenn adjourned the meeting at 10:23 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 9th, at 6:30 p.m. in the annex kitchen.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Almon, Member Relations Director
Substituting for Susan Peacock, Secretary, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.

6/7/2009

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

Harrison County, Marshall, TX, April 22nd thru 25th, 2009

I have always been proud to be a Fort Bend Master Gardener, however, when I accepted the position of Awards Chairman I had no idea of what pride I would be feeling until attending this year's conference. Of the nine categories available, we submitted seven applications for awards. Of those seven categories, we received five awards – one 3rd place, two 2nd place and two 1st place. Absolutely outstanding!

Each county's Master Gardener organization is placed into categories dependent on their membership number – small, medium, medium-large, and large. Fort Bend is in the medium-large category. Each county has the option to submit an application for an award if they believe their program warrants one. The Master Gardener program is education-based, consequently, the more residents (adults & children) we reach during that one year, the more apt we are to winning an award. The content and context of these programs are critical, in particular considering the age group to which they are directed.

Three or four individuals are acquired from neighboring states to judge the applications submitted. These judges are individuals who are held very high within the Master Gardeners community – horticulturists, professors, directors of horticultural departments, etc. These individuals are selected by the State Awards Committee and their identity is never revealed to anyone. These individuals are mailed the applications (usually e-mailed) in mass and each makes their individual selections unknown to the other judging individuals. Consequently, the content and context of these applications are critical. Making it more difficult is the fact that there is a word limitation. This proved most difficult when our Ft. Bend people were compiling our thoughts on paper for our presentations. Our enthusiasm was displayed in our presentations significantly.

This year there were more ties than ever before – two-way and three-way ties. Victoria County was our largest competitor in our medium/large category. They won six awards to our five.

Publication Award: 1st place went to Smith County for “Northeast Texas Gardening Guide”. 2nd place we won for our Entomology Groups Publication “Garden Insect Field Guide”, and there was a tie for 3rd place between Victoria and Ellis counties.

Graphic Award: 1st place we won with our Green Thumb Seminar “Attracting Birds & Butterflies to Your Garden” by Pam Tatge. 2nd place was awarded to EctorMidland (a combination of 2 counties joining together). There was no 3rd place winner.

Media Award: We have never competed in this category, however, we intend to in the future. It appears that most of these winners have consisted of those submitting weekly and monthly articles in local newspapers with “Tip of the Week”, “The Gardeners Dirt”, “Living Magazine Articles” and a 2nd place winner from Collin County w/ their website.

Education Award: We submitted an application, but were not allowed to send in our CD to accompany our application. I believe we had a great 1st place winner, but without the CD the total description on paper wasn't sufficient.

Project Award: We submitted our Gazebo building process as our application for the Project Award. I personally feel this was a great project, however, since the basis of the Master Gardener objectives is education we probably needed to place more emphasis on the programs this Outdoor Classroom venue has provided.

Newsletter Award: We have submitted and received awards in the past for our "Grapevine" publication. However, the competition has gotten stronger. The publication must include educational articles for our membership, articles describing educational seminars given to our membership and open to the public, as well as current activities within our organization. This year we won 1st place with 2nd place to Smith County and 3rd place to Travis County.

Association Award: Is awarded to the county most active in providing educational programs for the public. Numbers of those touched by our members is what counts. Our Ag-tivity Barn, Green Thumb Seminars, Hot Line, 1st of the month Gardening with the Gardeners, Katy Home Show booths, and many more is what helped us achieve our 2nd place award. The 1st place award went to Denton County and we tied for 2nd with Victoria County.

Individual Award: I have no idea what the specific criteria is for this award, but I'm sure it's not for just volunteer hours. 1st place went to Denton County, 2nd place was a tie between Nueces and Travis Counties, and 3rd place was a tie between Smith and Victoria and Ft. Bend Counties.

Our past accomplishments have been recognized with awards, but not to this year's extent. Also, more Master Gardener Associations are applying their efforts towards state recognition. Consequently, it's becoming more difficult to win an award. There were numerous counties applying for multiple awards this year. One county had one major project and won six awards from this one project. However, that's water under the bridge and we have next year to blow them away again – and I have no doubt that we will.

Your hard work has been recognized. Be proud of yourselves and all your accomplishments. Thank you for allowing me to show this pride to the State!

Jodie Douglass, Awards Chairman
Fort Bend Master Gardeners

Greenhouse Report

April – May 2009

- * Weed control was performed in the greenhouse at the last Saturday workday. Additional treatment still needs to be done when the chemical spray program is approved and ready for implementation.
- * The north wall has been leveled, had the support poles excavated and the poles concreted in so that hopefully the wall will keep from sagging.
- * Work is almost done in straightening the north wall after it was pushed to the south by Hurricane Ike. Anchors were screwed into the ground in six places and used to pull the north wall back straight and plumb. Steel cables and turn buckles were added to ensure that the wall continues to stay straight.
- * Work will begin the week of May 11-16 to reinstall the evaporative cooling system that collapsed from the failure of the screws holding the water return trough in place.
- * After the evaporative cooling system is reinstalled, work will begin on installation of the shade cloth over the greenhouse roof. With the unseasonably hot weather we have been having, the shade cloth needs to be installed to reduce the temperatures inside the greenhouse.

Respectfully submitted,
Glenn Dresner

Ft. Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Landscaping Report – May 2009
Report to the Board
Submitted by: Cindy Fairbanks/Jane Gray

Berry Patch –

Dell and associates worked on Wednesday. They cleaned up and weeded.

Butterfly Garden –

Looking wonderful after the transformation. New perennials and annuals have been added.

Circle Gardens –

Georgia and members will be coming out soon to take out the winter plants and plant the summer plants.

Cottage Garden –

Looking beautiful with so many plants in bloom.

Earth Kind Rose Garden –

No report.

Everyone's Garden (the E-Garden) –

No report.

Front Yard –

Not much to report. Looking cleaned up and mulched and the flowers are beautiful.

Herb Knot Garden –

No report from Carol.

Japanese Garden –

Bridge has been sanded and coated with primer and paint. Will be painting it a red color soon. Glenn, Cliff, and Jim worked on the sprinkler system. Will be taking out all of the drip system and installing regular pipe for better coverage.

Native Garden/Rain Harvesting –

Saturday workday consisted of weeding and trimming. Also applying new ultra soil. Gloria and Susan are always there to help. All of the plants that were put in the ground during the months of March and April are in full bloom and are showing new growth.

Rose Garden –

Faith and members were very busy with the Rose Rustler's sale.

Vegetable Garden –

Patty let everyone know that there were vegetable starter plants in the greenhouse for anyone that wanted them. Walkways were weeded. Carrots and onions were harvested on the Saturday workday. Marilyn and Patty are working on the plan for the square foot garden and will need help with it.

Vineyard –
No report.

Water Garden –

Nelson's Water Gardens gave us a quote of \$2,000.00 to install a bog pump in the pond. This will be discussed with Terry Williams, Cindy, Jane, and Margo before presenting it to the board.

Yardwise/Compost –

Diana was out on Wednesday to turn the piles of compost.

Miscellaneous/Discussion–

- Not much to report on for the Saturday workday due to Jane and Cindy being out of town and the Rose Rustler's sale.
- The Outdoor Classroom is coming along. Most of the soil has been added for the new beds and the rest should be put down by the end of this week.
- Jane has gotten an email back from Mary Dargan in regards to the landscape class. Dates have not yet been finalized.

Member Relations Report May 2009

Membership

Currently, there are 169 certified FBCMG members, representing an increase of one member since last month. Membership rosters are continually updated and posted as needed.

Spring Garden Tour – Sunday, May 3, 2009

Five gardens in Needville were opened to FBCMG members and their families from 1 to 6 pm. Approximately 30 master gardeners attended. Hosts for the informal tour were Hester Hackstedt, Becky Leugemors, Carolyn McDaniel, Joy Pumphrey, and Steve Spears. The informal fall garden tours will be held on two Sundays in the late fall and the areas will be determined at a later date.

Field Trip to Nature's Way Resources and Mercer Arboretum – Saturday, May 16, 2009

Signups are currently being accepted for the field trip on May 16th. John Ferguson will lead a tour of his facilities at 10 am and the group will have lunch at the White Flamingo Restaurant in Spring. The remainder of the day will be spent at Mercer Arboretum. While guided tours are not usually conducted on weekends, there is a possibility that a tour will be arranged for FBCMG members. The Bromeliad Society of Houston will be holding a sale and show the weekend of the field trip.

Field Trip to Brookwood Community – Date TBD

The possibility of a field trip to visit the Brookwood Community facilities in June is being explored. Lunch at the Brookwood Café would also be on the itinerary. Jolene Maurer is researching this option.

Field Trip to Montgomery County Master Gardeners, Conroe, TX – Date TBD

A weekday visit to tour the demonstration gardens and facilities of the Montgomery County Master Gardeners is also in the planning stage. More information will be forthcoming on the possibility.

Fall Field Trip to Shangri-La Gardens in Orange, TX

Jolene Maurer is researching this option.

Plant Swap at the Monthly Meetings

The second month of the swap showed more member participation. It is hoped that each succeeding month will build momentum as members become more interested and more accustomed to the procedures. Hester Hackstedt is doing a great job of facilitating the swap.

Submitted by Marilyn Almon
May 11, 2009

Suggestions for Fort Bend Master Gardeners to Prepare for FBC Residents for Conversion to Surface Water

May 10, 2009

- Use FBMG website as a reference for practices that people can use to implement the Earth-Kind Landscape principles in their own landscapes.
- Consider using the FBMG demonstration gardens as a model for Earth-Kind Landscape practices. (Could start with the new landscaping to the Gazebo.
- Encourage our Master Gardener Chairpersons to start implementing Earth-Kind plants in their demonstration gardens.
- Use the FBMG website as a link to the Texas A&M Agri-Life websites on Earth-Kind Landscape principles
- Look at opportunities to write Earth-Kind Landscape articles for the newspapers and magazines dedicated to Ft. Bend County residents
- Consider a field trip to San Antonio to get further information on their work to reduce water usage.
- Research cost structure and surveys for water services in Florida.
- Contact city officials in various cities and communities to see how FBMG can partner with them to increase knowledge of surface water conversion and implementation of Earth-Kind Landscape principles.
- Develop information on why surface water conversion has become necessary and post information on FBMG website.
- Consider working with the George Foundation for grant funding to be used to create publications like the San Antonio Landscape Guide.
- Develop a program to be taught to FBMG's so that they can be spokespersons with their neighbors and friends on the benefits of Earth-Kind Landscape principles to reduce water usage.
- Discuss with San Antonio leaders on their strategy plan for reaching all classes of residents (i.e. rich vs. poor, homeowners vs. renters, etc.)
- Develop a scorecard for measuring the effectiveness of communicating Earth-Kind Landscape principles and water use reduction (i.e. website hits at our FBMG website, etc.)

Submitted by Glenn Dresner